Zero Miles Per Hour

It had been days since I had gotten a full night sleep, maybe even longer. At the speed that I tend to go, somewhere between eight and nine thousand miles per hour, I was fading fast, but that wasn’t going to stop me. I always told you that instead of burning the metaphorical candle at both ends, or even in the middle, I simply threw the candle away, never lighting it at all, and today was no exception. However, I also always told you that I had no plans of slowing down my speed, out of the potential toxicity of down time.

The air was painfully cold as I power walked through the packed parking lot, stabbing at my face like needles. Too cold for snow, too cold to think, and definitely too cold to slow down. I was quickly approaching my Jeep, it’s normal shiny black covered almost entirely in sand like a dirty swine. If only I had time to clean, I thought to myself with a sigh. In one fluid motion I unlocked and jumped into my Jeep, but was greeted with an involuntary screech as the ice cold leather seats met my legs, protected by a mere layer of leggings.

As I started my car, my mind wandered, away from the icebox I had entered and towards you. I thought about the way that you grin from ear to ear at the very mention of anything you even remotely like and the way you squeeze up your face into a frown a cartoon character would envy when things were irritating you. I couldn’t help but to smile. I flipped on Pandora as sound waves Stevie Nicks began to make their way through my speakers, straight into my brain.

Meanwhile at your house, it was a little bit louder. Led Zeppelin rang through the speakers of your dust coated record player, Jon Bonham, your spirit animal, banging out the beat of your heart on his drums. You danced from room to room in your compact apartment with your partner in crime, Gypsy the cat, never far behind you. The sun beat through the windows, taking you completely away from the winter cold, and at least a little bit away from reality. A goose egg breakfast sandwich in hand, you couldn’t help but to smile as you removed your phone from your pocket and sent me a quick message.

Back in the Jeep, Stevie was nearing her crescendo. *To the gypsy that remains faces freedom with a little fear. I have no fear, I have only love.* I pushed my voice beyond its limits, singing so loud that my voice repeatedly cracked, but I didn’t mind. I was interrupted only as my phone let out a shrill string of quacks signifying that I had received a message. Looking down at my phone, I only needed to see the first letter of the senders name to know that it was you: David. My breath caught in my throat and I choked it out. I picked up my phone and quickly unlocked it, anxious to see what you had to say. You wanted me to come over for a bit and, conveniently, I wanted the very same thing, so without saying a thing I headed in your direction.

I retuned my eyes to the road as they threatened to cross as if I had been staring at a screen for hours. I really need to stop driving this tired, I told myself, if that is even possible. As the tires of my Jeep danced on and off the yellow center line of the road, I made a promise to myself that someday I soon I would finally start getting sleep again, that someday soon life would slow back down. I’m not sure I actually believed myself at that point, yet over and over again during my trek I repeated this vow to myself. Good thing you only lived but a few minutes from where I had parked my car, as by the time I had arrived I was secretly obsessed with sleeping.   
 As I dragged myself up your stairs then through your door and the tapestry that follows it, my eyes continued to struggle to adjust. Seriously eyeballs, I thought to myself, just do your job, I don’t have time for this. I busted into your kitchen where you stood with Gypsy loyally at your feet, both of you looking at nothing in particular. Slowly you turned your head until your gaze met mine and you smiled sweetly.

“What!?” I sounded far more defensive than I had intended, completely missing my mark in a haze of exhaustion and the intoxication of your smile.

“Oh, you.” Your smile widened, but your eyes flickered with hints of concern.

“What about me?”

“You just…” You paused. Though it was probably brief, it seemed to take an eternity in my slow-moving mind as I waited to see just what you had to say about me. You spoke sweetly, “you forgot how to relax.”

My jaw dropped and my heart followed suit; you had figured me out. I could not fathom how you had made such an astute observation based on the little that you knew about me. Who had told you? I knew that was a ridiculous thought, obviously no one had told you, but in my mind there had to be some sort of answer as to how you had come to decide that about me aside from watching me.

“It’s not that I forgot how to relax, David,” I sounded defensive, why did I always have to sound so defensive, “it’s just that-“

“Hey, hey, hey, no.” You always knew how to silence me before I went off on a pointless tangent. Whatever I said next would have been a lie anyway, so thank you for that. “Listen, it’s okay. Come here.” You took me by my right hand, softly but with purpose, and led me into your room across the way from the kitchen in which we stood, with Gypsy as the caboose of our train. You turned off the music as we entered the room. The silence somehow rang louder.

“What are we doing?”

“I’m glad you asked,” you grinned again, always with that grin, “we’re going to take a nap.”

“What?” I looked at him, then Gypsy in case he had any thoughts on the idea, which he didn’t seem to, and back to you. “I really don’t need a nap, I’m fine, I promise.”

You clearly wouldn’t take no for an answer, and I suppose this statement was too silly to warrant a response from you, as you flopped on to your bed and, as you still held my hand, I did as well. I went to say something, to continue fighting your drive to get me to slow down, but I knew that all efforts were futile. You had won this round, and I wasn’t even remotely disappointed.  
 I scooted closer to you were you were lying on your back. In one quick motion I wrapped my arm around your waist and put my head on your chest, feeling you exhale with a quiet hum. I moved my hand from your hip up to your collarbone and hummed back, completely giving in to the moment. Though I couldn’t see your face and I never opened my eyes, I swear I could feel you smiling. It was the perfect time to slow all the way down to a stop.